

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please amend the claims as follows:

### **Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of managing a locked resource in a distributed environment, the method comprising:
  - receiving a request to access the resource, wherein the request originates from a requesting client computer system;
  - determining whether the resource has a conflicting lock;
  - if the resource has a conflicting lock, returning lock information to the requesting client computer system, so that the retry strategy of the requesting client computer system may be modified; and
  - if the resource does not have a conflicting lock, performing the requested access.
2. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 1 wherein the lock information is related to expected lifetime of the lock.
3. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 2 wherein the conflicting lock is owned by a lock owner and wherein the lock owner sets the expected lifetime of the lock.
4. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 2 wherein the requesting client computer system modifies a request strategy based on the returned information.
5. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 4 wherein the search  
request strategy relates to the a time period between requests for the resource.

6. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 1 wherein the lock ~~property~~ information relates to the sharing property values of the lock.

7. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 6 wherein the request has a predetermined type and wherein the search request strategy relates to the type of request.

8. (Original) A computer program product readable by a computer and encoding instructions for executing the method recited in claim 1.

9. (Original) A computer program product readable by a computer and encoding instructions for executing the method recited in claim 5.

10. (Original) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a locked resource, wherein the locked resource comprises:

a resource object data section for storing actual object data; and

a lock object, wherein the lock object may comprise an expected lifetime property.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of allocating access to a resource in a distributed environment, the method comprising:

receiving a request to access the resource, wherein the request originates from a requesting client computer system;

determining whether the resource has a conflicting lock;

if the resource has a conflicting lock, blocking the resource for the requesting client computer system until the resource is free; and

performing the requested access, allocating a new lock to the requesting computer system.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 11 wherein the request for access to the resource further comprises a request to block the resource.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 11 wherein the request to block the resource is a predetermined header having a time value for defining a time period to block the resource.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of unlocking a locked resource in a distributed environment, the locked resource having a lock object associated with a lock owner, the method comprising:

receiving a request to access the locked resource, wherein the request originates from a requesting client computer system other than the lock owner and wherein the request comprises a request to break the lock object;

identifying the request to break the lock object;

determining whether the requesting client computer system is cleared to break the lock object; and

removing the lock object from the resource if the requesting client computer system is cleared to break the lock object.

15. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 14 further comprising:

notifying the lock owner that the lock object of the request to break the lock before removing the lock object.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 15 wherein the lock object is not removed for a predetermined time following notifying the lock owner of the request to break the lock.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method as defined in claim 15 wherein the lock object has a timeout property value and the timeout property value is modified to effectively remove the lock object.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method program product readable by a computer and encoding instructions for executing the method recited in claim 14.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer system for managing resources in a distributed environment, the distributed environment having a plurality of resources and wherein at least one resource is associated with a lock object, the system comprising:

a receive module for receiving a request from a requesting client application program to access at least one resource in the distributed environment;

a determination module for determining whether the resource has a conflicting lock object associated with the requested resource; and

a communication module for returning lock information to the client application program if the resource has a conflicting lock, wherein the lock information returned to the requesting client application program relates to the expected lifetime of the lock.

20. (Currently Amended) A system as defined in claim 19 wherein:

an owning client application program owns a lock object for the requested resource;

~~the lock information returned to the requesting client application program relates to the expected lifetime of the lock;~~ and

the owning client application program determines the expected lifetime of the lock object.

21. (Original) A system as defined in claim 20 wherein the requesting client application program modifies a request strategy based on received information from the communication module.

22. (Original) A system as defined in claim 19 further comprising:

a blocking module for blocking the locked resource for the requesting client application program until the resource is released; and

an allocation module for allocating a new lock to the requesting client application program following the release of the resource.

23. (Original) A system as defined in claim 22 wherein the requesting client application program requests to block the resource when requesting access to the resource.

24. (Original) A system as defined in claim 19 wherein the receive module is adapted to receive a request to break an existing lock object; the system further comprising:  
a breaking module for removing the existing lock object for the requested resource in response to a received request to break an existing lock object.

25. (Original) A system as defined in claim 24 wherein the requesting client application program requests to break the existing lock object associated with the requested resource.

26. (Original) A system as defined in claim 25 further comprising a determination module that determines whether the requesting client application program is suitably authorized and wherein the existing lock object is not removed in response to the request to break the lock object unless the requesting client application program is suitably authorized.